

CLAIMS

1. A method for providing vendor-managed inventory services via a vendor-managed inventory tool over a network environment, comprising:

receiving a signal from a sensor device at a buyer system indicating that a minimum level specified for a product used in a manufacturing location has been reached, said level measured by a quantity of said product;

receiving a demand note from said buyer system requesting restocking of said product;

querying a local inventory database for a supply availability status wherein said querying causes said vendor-managed inventory tool to:

transmit said demand note to a local inventory system for said restocking of said product,

wherein said querying indicates that sufficient quantities of said product are locally available at said buyer system; and

transmit a purchase order to a vendor system;

check supply levels of said product in vendor system storage;

check supply levels of said product in vendor warehouse storage under consignment;

transmit a notice to said buyer system where said supply levels of said product in said vendor system storage or said vendor warehouse storage are sufficient to meet requirements specified in said purchase order; and

transmit said purchase order to a factory for manufacture of said product, where said supply levels are insufficient to meet said requirements specified in said purchase order;

wherein said querying indicates that insufficient quantities of said product are locally available at said buyer system.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said minimum level specified for said product is determined by said buyer system and implemented via said vendor-managed inventory tool.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising specifying a maximum level acceptable for said product via said vendor-managed inventory tool.

4. A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for providing vendor-managed inventory services via a vendor-managed inventory tool over a network environment, the storage medium including instructions for causing a computer to implement a method comprising:

receiving a signal from a sensor device at a buyer system indicating that a minimum level specified for a product used in a manufacturing location has been reached, said level measured by a quantity of said product;

receiving a demand note from said buyer system requesting restocking of said product;

querying a local inventory database for a supply availability status wherein said querying causes said vendor-managed inventory tool to:

transmit said demand note to a local inventory system for said restocking of said product,

wherein said querying indicates that sufficient quantities of said product are

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locally available at said buyer system; and

transmit a purchase order to a vendor system;

check supply levels of said product in vendor system storage;

check supply levels of said product in vendor warehouse storage under consignment;

transmit a notice to said buyer system where said supply levels of said product in said vendor system storage or said vendor warehouse storage are sufficient to meet requirements specified in said purchase order; and

transmit said purchase order to a factory for manufacture of said product, where said supply levels are insufficient to meet said requirements specified in said purchase order;

wherein said querying indicates that insufficient quantities of said product are locally available at said buyer system.

5. The storage medium of claim 4, wherein said minimum level specified for said product is determined by said buyer system and implemented via said vendor-managed inventory tool.

6. The storage medium of claim 4, further comprising instructions for causing said computer to implement:

specifying a maximum level acceptable for said product via said vendor-managed inventory tool.

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7. A system for providing vendor-managed inventory services via a vendor-managed inventory tool over a network environment, comprising:

a vendor system including:

a server;

a workstation in communication with said server;

a data storage device in communication with said server; and

a storage location in communication with said server;

wherein said communication is facilitated by an electronic communications link; and

a network link to:

a buyer system;

a manufacturing system; and

a storage warehouse.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein said manufacturing system produces products for use by said buyer system.

9. The system of claim 7, wherein said vendor system manages inventory levels for products consumed by said buyer system via said vendor-managed inventory tool.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein said inventory levels of said products are monitored by a sensor device located at said buyer system.

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11. The system of claim 10, wherein said sensor device transmits a signal to said vendor system via said vendor-managed inventory tool relating to a specified inventory level.

12. The system of claim 7, wherein said vendor-managed inventory tool facilitates billing activities between said vendor system, said buyer system, said manufacturing system and said warehouse, said activities including:

purchase order generation and transmission;

demand note generation and transmission; and

invoice generation and transmission.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein information relating to said billing activities is stored in said data storage device.

14. The system of claim 7, wherein said vendor-managed inventory tool causes said vendor system to provide delivery of said goods pursuant to said demand note.

15. The system of claim 7, wherein said vendor-managed inventory tool causes said vendor system to provide delivery of goods pursuant to said purchase order.

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